

# **USA: Our Support for Ukraine: Moral, Political, and Strategic**

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We support the Ukrainian people and Ukraine because it is an independent, sovereign nation that has been the victim of an unprovoked war by Russia. We support the Ukrainians' right to fight back and, in order to do so, to get arms wherever they can. Our support for Ukraine is based on principles that are moral and political as well as on an analysis that is strategic.

My mother, a working-class woman, taught me as a small child that one takes the side of the underdog: Of the kid who is bullied, of the woman who is mistreated, of the worker who is underpaid and overworked, of the black person who is discriminated against. And on several occasions, I saw her take their side. If I had never become a socialist, those reasons would be enough to make me a defender of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin has destroyed the country's industry and made it impossible to plant and harvest in its fields. He has bombed apartment buildings, schools, and hospitals. Russia has killed thousands of Ukrainians — men, women and children — and displaced millions and forced over 5.5 million to flee to other countries. So, as any child can see, we must stand with the underdog, with Ukraine, against the bully.

When I became an adult and a socialist, I became convinced by Marxist arguments that one should support the right of nations to self-determination, such as Vietnam then fighting for independence. I came to believe we had to oppose all imperialist powers. Imperialism meant the attempt by one nation to impose itself on another economically, politically, or militarily. It was clear that my country, the United States, was an imperial power, but so too was the Soviet Union that dominated Eastern Europe.

Colonial and neo-colonial nations, no matter what their government, I came to believe, deserved our support in the struggle against empire. I learned that in the history of this struggle against empire, socialists had supported the Ethiopian state, despite its reactionary monarch, against Fascist Italy (1935-37), the Spanish bourgeois Republic against Franco's fascist Falange (1936-39), and the Vietnamese government, despite its Stalinist politics, in its war against the United States (1955-75). (Though, we did not support the Taliban in its struggle against the twenty-year U.S. occupation because they were simultaneously waging a reactionary war against a major part of the Afghan population. Similarly in Iraq, because Saddam Hussein was engaged in an oppressive war against the Kurdish population and rejected as oppressor by a major part of the Arab population.)

So how could I today with these principles not support Ukraine, the former Russian and Soviet colony? Yes, there has been corruption in the government, a small but dangerous neo-Nazi movement in the country, and Zelensky himself is a neoliberal. But genuine anti-colonialism and self-determination mean that Ukrainians have to deal with those issues themselves — with our solidarity,

of course. As socialists, our support is directed principally to the Ukrainian left, the socialists, anarchists, and independent leftists who are fighting Russia while also opposing Zelensky's neoliberal politics.

We support Ukraine as well for broader and longer-term strategic reasons. Autocratic and authoritarian governments, some with imperial ambitions, now exist in many nations, not only Russia, but also China, India, Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Hungary among others. Far right politicians threaten democracy in other countries from the United States and France to Brazil, and Belarus. The defense of Ukraine is also a strategic defense of democracy against authoritarianism. Despite all the problems of the Ukrainian government, the prospects for democracy in Ukraine will be far better if the country is not conquered by a reactionary, murderous, and autocratic aggressor.

The same moral, political, and strategic ideas that inform our support for Ukraine also make us leery of the United States, the European Union, and NATO. Our support for Ukraine is founded on its political independence, which could be undermined as a result of its military dependence on the United States and European nations. If dependence leads to U.S. control of the war, that in turn could lead to a U.S.-European proxy war, increasing the danger of a Third World War, a nuclear war. Putin, at the same time, threatens a genocidal war to annihilate Ukraine and if it cannot, then then he plans to dismember it, already having taken Crimea and now annexing Donetsk, Luhansk, and the coast along the Black Sea. For all of these reasons, we must continue to stand with Ukraine and strengthen its ability to remain politically and militarily independent.

We stand for Ukraine's victory and Russia's defeat. We stand with the Ukrainian Left, with the Russian anti-war activists, and with the Russian democratic and socialist opposition. We stand in solidarity with Ukraine. Victory to Ukraine!

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**P.S.**

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